

# Socialist Worker

inside

**FRUIT OF THE LOOM:  
Fight to  
stop the  
closure**



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For a Workers' Republic and International Socialism 50p Solidarity price £1

## One law for crooked politicians...

# WHY IS AHERN PROTECTING HAUGHEY?



Which one is Haughey's dummy

**'Put Haughey behind bars'. This should be our New Year's resolution for 1999.**

It is nearly two years since the news broke that Haughey was getting £1,000 a day in bribes from big business. Yet he is still walking about freely.

It is a different story for Sabrina Walsh, a young impoverished drug addict. She is serving six years just for robbing a handbag.

Haughey has even escaped paying taxes on the bribes because he is being

protected by Bertie Ahern and Fianna Fail.

In the 1980s Ahern emerged as Haughey's chief lieutenant

Haughey called him 'the most skillful, the most devils, the most cunning' of them all.

### Denounced

Since becoming Taoiseach, Ahern has never once personally denounced Haughey.

Instead his behind the scenes manoeuvres have protected his former boss.

In 1992 when Fianna Fail was alone in a caretak-

er government Ahern appointed two Revenue Appeals Commissioners - his own brother-in-law Ronan Kelly and John O'Callaghan who wrote a policy paper on taxation for Fianna Fail.

The Appeals Commissioners hear about sixty cases each year from wealthy individuals who want their tax reduced.

Ahern's cute move had placed two of his cronies into these key position to help his rich friends.

It certainly worked for Haughey. Ronan Kelly heard the case in private. He heard it alone. He called

no witnesses. And he gave no public reason for his judgement.

The public scandal has forced the Revenue Commissioners to appeal the case to the Circuit Court. But Haughey will appeal all the way to the Supreme Court.

There he will appear before judges that he personally appointed to office!

The only way this farce can be ended is when workers get on the streets and protest.

Instead of sweet talking with Fianna Fail, the union leaders should be calling their members out.

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*Rosa Luxemburg*



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**Conor Cruise O'Brien and Sophies Song reviewed**





# 'Crony capitalism' Irish style

**'CRONY CAPITALISM' is alive and well in Ireland. And the Revenue Commissioners have been turning a blind eye for decades**

The Revenue Commissioners are supposed to organise the collection of taxes from everyone but they sit back and let the money roll in from the PAYE workers.

The Haughey case shows that they turn a blind eye to the tax bills of the rich.

Haughey began his career as an accountant who specialised in the details of tax laws.

He knew the system better than anyone and he cultivated a close relationship with key figures in the Revenue Commissioners

## Official

One of his key cronies was Noel Corcoran, who was a prominent official with the Revenue Commissioners.

Haughey and Corcoran were so close that they bought houses beside each other and even had tunnel that linked them together.

A key meeting between Haughey and Ben Dunne's lawyer, Noel Smyth, — another expert on tax dodging — took place in Corcoran's house.

Corcoran has since left the Revenue Commissioners to set up a tax consultancy practice. Now he gets paid a fortune for telling wealthy businessmen how to avoid tax!

Far from being a neutral body, the Revenue Commissioners have turned a blind eye to almost every scam devised by the rich.

Last year, for example, it was revealed that there

were 30,000 bogus non-residents account in Ireland. Yet even though some were used to launder drug money, the Revenue Commissioners

did nothing.

The wealthy have got so much power in Ireland that no major party in Dail Eireann will campaign on the policy: Tax

the Rich.

Only parties like the Socialist Workers Party want to tax the parasites to the hilt.

## A piece of nonsense

**PAYE workers got a miserly £6 or £7 a week worth of tax cuts in the Budget, but ex-Taoiseach Charles Haughey has had his tax bill of £2 million reduced to zero.**

And all because of a nonsense ruling made by Ahern's brother in law, Ronan Kelly.

## Exempt

Kelly ruled that Haughey had found a loophole under a law whereby "gifts" given to an Irish resident from abroad are exempt

from tax.

Because the money came from foreign accounts run by Dunne, Haughey was supposed to be free.

But this is all gobbligook.

The McCracken Tribunal stated categorically that it was "satisfied beyond all reasonable doubt that all of the monies paid by Mr Ben Dunne were received by or on behalf of Mr Charles Haughey for his benefit or, in one case, for the benefit of a member of his family"

Yet Judge McCracken was not even called as a witness by Kelly.

## AHERN STILL LOOKS AFTER HIS CRONIES

**EVEN AFTER the recent scandals. Ahern was still appointing his cronies to state companies.**

On Christmas Eve, when almost everyone's attention was taken off politics, Ahern quietly appointed his friends to the board of Aer Lingus.

Top of the list was his mate, Chris Wall who is Ahern's former election agent. Wall is a top executive with the drug company Welcome who make millions from the health service

As a board member of Aer Lingus, Wall will get five years of free flights and a little bonus of £5,000 a year for attending ten meetings.

## Appointment

The other appointment Ahern made was Maire Geoghegan-Quinn, the former Fianna Fail cabinet Minister who resigned because 'public life' was too much for her.



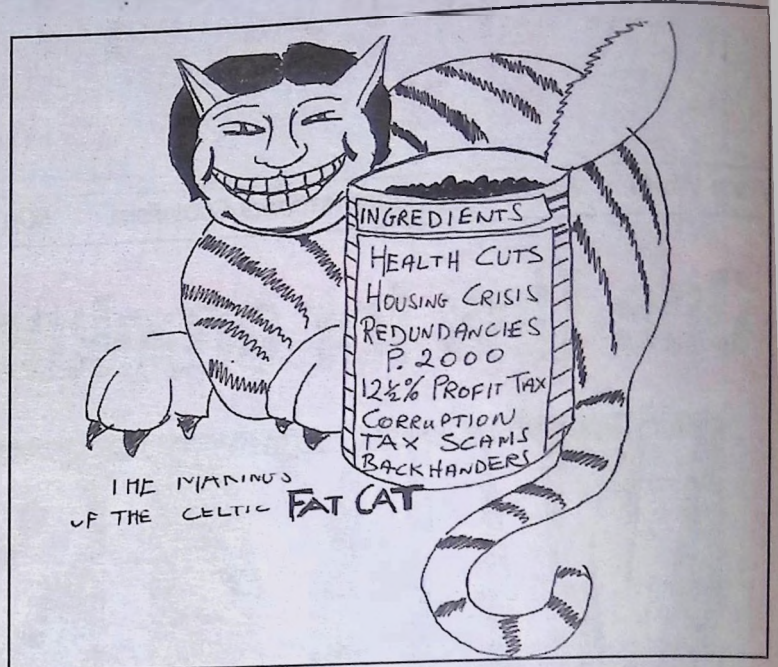
Maire Geoghegan-Quinn

They will join Mr Des Richardson who is also an Aer Lingus board member. Richardson was Ahern's major fund raiser

and ensured he knew absolutely nothing about where all the money came from. A bit like Haughey's bag man, Des Traynor.

## Generous George

THE BILLIONAIRE speculator George Soros was a major contributor to the Yes campaign in the Good Friday Agreement referendum. Soros made his loot by cashing in on the financial crisis around the world. He had enough from gambling on the currency markets to give £30,000 to the campaign. Bizarrely, Gerry Adams, who met Soros last June to convince him to invest in the North, calls the financier a 'philanthropist'.



## A conspiracy by the rich

The political establishment is terrified at what might come out of Flood and Moriarity Tribunals.

They know that disclosures about their tight corrupt networks might seep out. Key political correspondents are already predicting that the revelations could 'rock the state'

But the rich cronies who run Ireland are fighting back. According to Dick Walsh, the Irish Times Political corre-

spondent, Justice Flood has come under 'unprecedented pressure' to obstruct his investigations. Several Supreme Court cases have been taken to put obstacles in Flood's way.

Key witnesses such as Tom Gilmartin, who alleged that Bertie Ahern was named as someone who was asked to make representations on planning, now say they will not testify.

Leaks are systematically appearing in the Independent Group of

newspapers, owned by Tony O'Reilly. These leaks are then being used by the accused to say they cannot get justice.

It will take mass demonstrations to break up this conspiracy.

When Italy was rocked by corruption scandals, the unions called strikes and demonstrations. It ensured that a few 'dirty hands' were put behind bars.

Now is the time to pressurise the Irish unions to do the same.

## Industrial accidents soar in Celtic Tiger

**MORE PEOPLE are dying in their jobs than ever before. Last year 66 people were killed in workplace accidents — a staggering increase of 40% over the previous year.**

The construction industry tops the list for industrial deaths once again.

Last year 22 workers lost their lives on the sites compared to 15 the previous year.

Nearly half the dead were classified as 'self employed'.

But this often hides the fact that workers have been forced onto contract labour where safety conditions are at their worse.

## Tough at the top?

**"A TD's salary is pathetic", laments Mary Harney.**

Mary Harney wants to see TD's paid a least £60,000 a year. Already TD's are paid a huge £35,000 a year — more than twice the average industrial wage. They awarded themselves a pay increase last year.

Mary Harney saw her salary as Tanaiste jump from £76,086 to £90,412 after the Cabinet gave themselves a 18 per cent pay rise. Her increase alone is more than what most workers earn in a year.

At the same time as she is bemoaning the state of politicians pay, Harney continues to wage war against the unemployed, forcing them into low paid work at £2 and £3 an hour.

## Legal Eagles

**SOME TD'S and former ministers aren't satisfied with a TD's salary. They need to top up their cash flow with legal fees paid by the tax payer.**

The Chief State Solicitors Office hires lawyers for the State and often uses TDs. For instance, former Foreign Affairs Minister and Fianna Fail TD Michael O'Kennedy is a Senior Counsel.

He receives a minister's pension of £14,444 but he also earned £42,650 for legal work for the government, while former Fine Gael minister George Bermingham topped up his ministerial pension with £56,000.

The state spent over £4m in legal fees to barristers in the last year. It is good to see at least some over-worked politicians are getting their share.

## NUCLEAR WINDFALL

THE EUROPEAN Union are yet again bankrolling the Nuclear Industry. Just before Christmas the EU gave £891 million to British Nuclear Fuels. While the government claims to be against nuclear power, Ireland is part of Euroatom — an EU body for the promotion of atomic energy.

The grant came at the same time as the British Health and Safety Authority revealed that Sellafield's stockpile of nuclear waste is in danger of leaking. According to the report there are over 70,000 cubic metres of intermediate level nuclear waste in the UK. 85% of it is in an unsafe condition.



what we think

# Euro: The bankers' currency

**THE NEW Year opened with a splurge of enthusiasm about the euro. Much of the media claimed it would bring prosperity, peace and political unity to Europe.**

The reality is quite different. The euro was first devised in 1989 by Jacques Delors, the EU supremo at the time, as part of a strategy to strengthen European capitalism against its rivals in the US and Japan.

In the years preceding its introduction, European governments imposed a discipline of 'tight monetary policies' on themselves.

### Attack

This was code for a policy of cutbacks on public spending and a sustained attack on conditions of public sector workers.

The results can be seen in Ireland with the slashing of hospital beds and demands for ever greater privatisation.

The European Central Bank is determined that these Thatcherite policies continue.

This is why they insist that the new left wing governments - who were elected because of workers disgust with monetarist policy - conform to their demand for more

austerity.

The new currency will encourage more brutal competition across Europe as the bosses demand ever more 'flexibility' to stay ahead of their rivals. This will include a spate of mergers which bring massive lay-offs in their wake

And in the end it will not solve the problems confronting European capitalism.

### Rivalries

It is still torn by national rivalries as each state attempts to look after its own companies.

On the very day the euro was launched a new row broke out over whether a German or French sponsored candidate should lead the European Central Bank.

None of this means we should offer any support to the hilariously named 'Committee for the Defence of the Irish Punt' who denounced the whole affair as "an act of national treason".

A return to DeValera's green isle is as unattractive as it is naive.

What counts for us is not the harp sign on the Irish punt but how many punts or euros are workers getting in return for their labour.

The euro is only the emblem of a bankers' Europe. The point is to change this by supporting the struggles of workers across the continent - and to ensure that those struggles are fought harder here.

## INDONESIA: The revolution continues



In 1998 the workers and students of Indonesia overthrew the dictator Suharto, in 1999 they need to overthrow the army and take power for themselves

Fianna Fail's racist fast track

**FIANNA FAIL used the Christmas season to try to fast track four refugees out of the country.**

Nigerian Ekundayo Omiyi was arrested and incarcerated in Mountjoy when he went to the Department of Justice to have his ID card renewed. Romanian Julien Costain was also arrested and put in Mountjoy

In Wexford two Romanians, Pasca Bujor and Pricop Danciu, were arrested by plain clothes Garda officers while they attempted to collect their social welfare.

Two days before Christmas Ekundayo was taken to Dublin Airport where government officials attempted to put him on a plane back to Belgium. They denied him access to his solicitor. When he attempted to resist his deportation he was charged with assault and returned to Mountjoy where he continues to be incarcerated.

### Causing

Fianna Fail politicians say that refugees are 'spongers' and are causing a housing crisis. But refugees are being forced to depend on social welfare because they are denied the right to

work or study in Ireland.

Nor is the fact that there are 40,000 on housing lists the fault of refugees. There are not enough local authority houses in Ireland because right wing governments ordered cutbacks on the building programme.

Already there are splits in the government over the issue of refugees. Mary Harney, along with IBEC, has called for quotas of skilled immigrants to be allowed into Ireland. They know that the Celtic Tiger boom has produced a shortage of labour.

But Fianna Fail vigorously rejected the proposal. They are trying to maintain their populist base by attacking refugees

and blaming them for lack of public funding for housing, health and education.

But the tide can be turned against Fianna Fail. When O'Donoghue tried to deport the Costinos family the people of Blanchardstown forced the government to back down.

The public outrage that resulted from the Costinos case has made the government less sure of their footing. They are now trying to conduct deportations in secret.

The racists in Fianna Fail can be stopped. Mass protests at every attempted deportation can force this government to back down.

## Will you sell Socialist Worker to five people?

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# news of the world

France

## Protests split open French Nazi Party

**EUROPE'S BIGGEST Nazi party has plunged into a huge crisis and looks set to split into two rival groups. The rift in France's National Front is a product of the growing resistance to it over recent years and will cheer anti-Nazis everywhere.**

THE CRISIS in the National Front erupted when its leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen, suspended his deputy, Bruno Mégret, from the party, seizing local party offices.

The infighting took on often bizarre forms.

Le Pen accused Mégret of being "racist, extreme right wing", while Mégret denounced Le Pen as a "guardian of Nazi ideas".

The accusations are equally true of both men.

Around the country there are reports of physical clashes between thugs supporting the rival Nazi leaders.

In Marseilles, a Mégret stronghold, Le Pen supporters ransacked the local party offices, physically threatening Mégret supporters.

The immediate reasons for the Nazi split focus on three issues.

One is the personal rivalry that exists between two would-be Führers.

A second centres on the European Parliament elections due next spring and who should head the Nazi list.

Thirdly, Le Pen and Mégret disagree over political strategy - until now they managed to paper over their differences.

They have over 1,000

councillors across the country.

Earlier this year the Nazis won seats on every one of the important regional councils across France.

Those elections saw the traditional conservative parties lose out badly.

The winners were France's governing Socialist [Labour] Party, which swept to office nationally last year.

Sections of the Conservatives in four key regions did deals with the Nazis in their desperation to stay in office.

Mégret argues the Nazis could make further gains by continuing to have alliances with the Conservatives.

### Corruption

Le Pen disagrees. He says the Nazis have built support by standing apart from established parties, attacking their corruption and betrayals.

Those disagreements have erupted because of the waves of anti-Nazi protest and wider social struggles of the last few years.

Although it was not clear what the outcome of the Nazi civil war would be, the party looked likely to split right down the middle.

This split provides a marvellous chance for anti-Nazis to step up the pressure and begin to break what has been the biggest Nazi threat in Europe.

### South Korea

## Socialists' heroic defiance in court

**SOCIALISTS IN South Korea, on trial for reading left wing books, have used the court hearings to speak out for socialism and condemn the regime.**

Against the background of economic crisis and workers' resistance, Korea's president, Kim Dae-jung, has ordered the arrest and imprisonment of dozens of members of the International Socialists of South Korea and other trade unionists and student activists.

At least 21 socialists are already jailed or awaiting sentence. They have shown tremendous courage and defiance.

Joo Soo-young, a deliv-



Mass mobilisations have the power to finish the Nazis off

### what we think

#### DOWN, BUT NOT YET OUT

THE SPLIT in the National Front is marvellous news. But no one should believe that it marks the end of the Nazi danger in France.

In 1921, splits in the Italian Fascist Party saw its leader resign from his position. That did not stop him leading the fascists to power in 1922.

Hitler's Nazi Party was riven by bitter splits and infighting. But such rifts on their own were not enough to halt the Nazis and Hitler came to power

in 1933.

France's Nazis are a long way at the moment from being the threat that Hitler or Mussolini was. But the lesson is clear. Unless the anti-Nazi fight is kept up, the Nazis can bounce back.

They will continue to try and grow by feeding off people's bitterness and the failure of the Socialist [Labour] Party to offer solutions.

Instead of simply sitting back and enjoying the Nazis tearing each other apart, it is necessary to build the protests to push them back into the sewers.

## Turning point in anti-nazi battle

**THE NATIONAL Front made its first breakthrough in France in 1983 and has grown slowly ever since.**

Just under two years ago it seemed stronger than ever, winning over 15 per cent in elections right across the country.

The National Front's biggest success came in early 1997 when it won control of the town council in Vitrolles, outside Marseilles.

The Vitrolles result was like an electric shock galvanising anti-Nazi and anti-racist protests.

### Marched

Over 100,000 people marched in Paris against new anti-immigrant laws planned by the then Conservative government.

Then around the country protests erupted whenever National Front meetings were held.

A key turning point came in Easter 1997, when the National Front held its congress in Strasbourg to celebrate its success.

Instead the city held

the first ever national demonstration against the National Front. Some 70,000 people came from around the country.

That wave of protest cracked the Nazis open, with the tension between Le Pen and Mégret erupting for the first time at the Strasbourg congress.

The political mood in France and the difficulties for the National Front have, been deepened by the waves of workers' struggles and strikes in recent years.

In December 1995 the then Conservative government was rocked by the millions strong public sector workers' strike-the biggest workers' protest in Western Europe for almost 20 years.

Since then lorry drivers have paralysed the country with strikes and blockades. The unemployed, last Christmas and again this year, launched protests and occupations of dole offices.

This wider social struggle points to an alternative to the despair the Nazis have sought to feed off, showing that ordinary people can fight back against unemployment and cuts.

ery worker for a daily paper, brought tears and anger to the audience at her court case when she described her appalling treatment.

She said, "The police hauled me in when my leg was hurt and allowed me no sleep for two days. My wound under the cast was so swollen that I felt like it was about to break the cast. I asked for help.

"But they would not listen. Instead they interrogated me until 5am the next day and allowed me to sleep only two hours on the third day."

### Stronger

She ended her speech from the dock with the words, "My yearning to realise my dream and my confidence in the ideas of socialism have grown even stronger."

Every one of the arrested socialists has put the defence of the workers' and students' movement above thoughts of their own personal safety.

They have turned their trials into an indictment of the undemocratic, free market regime of Kim Dae-Jung. Aeronautical worker Mo Seung-hoon said,

"At a time when a few trillion dollars are moving around the globe every day with a few key strokes, do people really starve because there isn't enough food to go round?"

"I don't think so. The May Day rally this year, where unemployed fathers and daughters marched together, and the May 7-29 strikes were entirely justified. Indeed they should be expanded into larger strikes. The revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx are the ideas of

the present. Such hope will illuminate more brightly in the 21st century."

Unemployed worker Kwon Oh-hyeun said, "The number of unemployed has passed 2.2 million. Restructuring will push it over four million. Billions of dollars are being given to the debt ridden companies, but not to workers."

### Struggle

"The economic crisis and the suppression of workers will only make more and more workers aware of the problems of existing society. I will do everything in my power to advance this struggle."

Yoo Young-me, a college tutor, said, "I am accused of backing North Korea. On the contrary, I have argued that North Korea is a system that exploits and oppresses

the working class and workers should overthrow their rulers there as well as in South Korea.

"I am proud of and glad to be part of workers' struggles against the madness of the market and to change this barbaric society into something new and different."

International solidarity has reduced the sentences of South Korean political prisoners and prevented ill treatment before.

That solidarity is desperately needed now.

**Send messages of support and get copies of solidarity motions from: Committee to Defend South Korean Socialists. PO Box 1648, Dublin 8**



# The bombing of Iraq

# Clinton and Blair are murderers

**SADDAM HUSSEIN** has emerged from the latest Gulf War stronger than ever. Within weeks of the US and British bombardment, Iraqi anti-aircraft missiles were firing at US warplanes in the area.

UN weapons inspectors have been thrown out of the country and are unlikely to be let return.

Unlike the war in 1991, almost every Arab government were forced to condemn the attacks on Iraq.

## Cynical

The bombing was a cynical attempt to divert attention from Clinton's impeachment.

It was also an attempt to prove the US is top dog. Clinton wanted to send a message to every world leader that anyone who

interferes with US interests will pay the price.

His propaganda machine tried to cover all this up by saying they — US and Britain — were trying to put Saddam 'in a cage'.

But the only people to pay the price of the war were the Iraqi people. Scores of civilians were murdered during the bombing.

No one should believe the claims that the bombs had a pinpoint accuracy.

Months after the last Gulf War in 1991, the US military were forced to admit that 70 percent of their smart missiles missed their targets.

Every cruise missile the British and the US fired cost nearly £1 million. They fired over two hundred in the four day bombardment.

The world is gripped by economic crisis and millions are suffering from starvation and poverty.

But the leaders of Western civilisation wanted to spend money on destroying lives not saving them.



Palestinians protesting against the bombing of Iraq

## Blood for Oil

**CLINTON AND Blair's latest war in the Gulf is linked to their attempt to control oil.**

Oil prices have been tumbling dramatically, threatening the interests of the multinationals and puppet Arab regimes. Before the war Iraq was about to increase its supply to the world market, causing prices to dip further.

### Targets

But one of the main targets of the recent bombing was the Basra oil field where many refineries were destroyed.

Western governments and giant multinationals will butcher anyone who is deemed to interfere with this crucial commodity.

In 1991 Lawrence Korb, the former US assistant defence secretary, admitted, "If Kuwait grew carrots we wouldn't give a damn."

Today the Middle East still accounts for around half of the world's known oil reserves outside the former USSR.

Western powers have tried to control what happens in the region ever since the first discovery of oilfields.

A Saudi Arabian diplomat admitted in 1991, "It is possible to see all these countries in the Gulf as imperialist creations that allow the West to play one

against the other in the interests of cheap oil."

Today there is a new oil scramble going on in the region around the Caspian Sea.

The US and Western powers are determined they will come out on top.

Their bombs and missiles were part of the strategy to bully other powers out of controlling the area's oil.

Last month the US energy secretary Bill Richardson said, "The fate of the Caspian region is about America's energy security. It is also about preventing strategic inroads by those who do not share our values."

## THE REAL TERRORISTS

**BILL CLINTON and Tony Blair claimed that they bombed Iraq because Saddam Hussein's regime has deadly weapons.**

They are hypocrites. The US admitted last year it has a stockpile of 30,000 tons of chemical weapons.

The US also possesses over 8,000 nuclear warheads and the means to detonate them anywhere in the world.

### Weapons

The US dropped tens of thousands of bombs and chemical weapons on Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos in the 1960s and 1970s.

Deadly napalm and Agent Orange devastated the environment and caused horrific injuries to millions of people. Their effects were very similar

"We are trying to move these newly independent countries towards the West."

"We would like to see them reliant on Western commercial and political interests rather than going another way."

"We have made a substantial political investment in the Caspian and it is very important to us that both the pipeline map and the politics come out right."

The US fears it has lost out over where the oil will be shipped.

It therefore has to reinforce control of the Middle East and make another effort to win back the Caspian.

## Protests over war

**THE IRISH government did not issue a word of condemnation against the US and British action.**

But the No to the War in the Gulf Campaign was able to mobilise hundreds to protest at very short notice.

■ 400 people marched in Dublin to an open meeting where they were addressed by speakers from the Iraqi opposition and the Kurdish solidarity campaign.

■ Over 100 marched in Galway and received a warm reception from Christmas shoppers.

Kevin Wingfield a spokesperson for the campaign said, "The situation is very unstable. We need to be ready to mobilise again at short notice. We should also be protesting loudly against the sanctions which have been imposed on Iraq since 1991."

Over half a million children have died because of the sanctions and over a million are malnourished.

Denis Haliday the former UN Humanitarian Aid Co-ordinator to Iraq has said that "We are destroying an entire society. It is illegal and immoral."

The UN Sanctions Committee have vetoed items like baby food, rice, children's clothes and sanitary towels. Clinton's bombs brought murder.

But so too do the continuing sanctions. They should be ended now.

## They built up Saddam

**CLINTON and BLAIR said that Saddam Hussein is an evil dictator.**

They did not mention that Saddam Hussein was made, and for many years backed, by the West.

■ Saddam seized power in 1963. The US saw his regime as a useful ally against left wing forces which were threatening Western control of oil.

The United States CIA spy agency even gave Saddam lists of socialists to hunt down and kill.

■ In 1980 Saddam invaded Iran with full backing from the US. The British, French and German governments all supplied Iraq with weapons to wage war against Iran.

■ In 1987 the US intervened directly in the war in support of Iraq, shooting down a civilian Iranian airplane.

■ All through the 1980s, as the Scott Report exposed, Britain's then Tory government continued to supply arms to Iraq.

■ The West helped Saddam get the facilities to make poison gas which was used against Iranian troops and then in the slaughter of 4,000 Iraqi Kurds in the town of Halabja. Western governments then helped cover up this atrocity.

■ As recently as 1988 the US was supplying anthrax to Saddam.

It was only when he threatened Western oil interests by trying to take over Kuwait that he suddenly became a "dictator".

Until then the West was perfectly prepared to keep quiet as he murdered his opponents and members of the Kurdish minority.



# Rosa Luxemburg:

# THE LIVING FLAME REVOLUTION

**EIGHTY YEARS ago on 15 January 1919, Rosa Luxemburg and her comrade Karl Liebknecht were arrested in Berlin.**

Rosa was taken away by two lieutenants who smashed her skull with their rifle butts. Her lifeless body was thrown into a canal, where it was not washed up until May. Karl Liebknecht was shot for allegedly trying to escape.

The German establishment had murdered two of the finest socialists who had stood out against the First World War. With their murders, the first phase of the German revolution came to an end. Ultimately its defeat was to prepare the way for Hitler and fascism.

## Mutiny

Only three months before, in November 1918, sailors in Kiel staged a mutiny when their officers ordered them to put to sea. They spread their revolt throughout Germany. Within days workers and soldiers councils had been established in the major towns. Just as in Russia it had taken a revolution to bring the bloody First World War to an end.

The revolution released Rosa Luxemburg from prison where she had been confined for anti-war activities.

Her small organisation, the Spartakist League argued that there had to be 'the disarming of the entire police force, of all officers, as well as all non-proletarian soldiers. On the economic and social field, there had to be the removal of parliaments and municipal councils, their functions to be taken over by workers and soldiers councils'

It was by no means empty rhetoric. On the 9th November, Karl Liebknecht led a march

by **SINEAD KENNEDY**

of tens of thousands in Berlin to demand 'a new proletarian state .. the free German socialist republic'.

But the German Labour Party, the SPD, still commanded tremendous support. Their leaders Ebert and Scheideman were determined to stop the revolution and preserve parliamentary rule.

When the Kaiser abdicated, Ebert, who had fully backed the war, was proclaimed the new Chancellor.

SPD supporters managed to win the majority of the positions on the workers councils. At first they argued that Germany could be organised through a system that combined the more radical and democratic workers councils with the parliament.

But as soon as the revolution showed any sign of faltering, the SPD tried to transfer power back to the parliament and restore the old state machine

They helped set up the Freikorps, a band of right wing officers, who prepared to crush the revolution. In December 1918, the SPD leaders called for elections to the Constituent assembly. Luxemburg had no doubts about their aims,

"They are calling a constituent assembly in order to create a bourgeois counter-weight to the Workers and Soldiers Councils, thereby shunting the Revolution onto the track of a mere bourgeois revolution and conjuring away its socialist aims"

As soon as the elections were over, the SPD began to crack down on workers militancy. They began a campaign against 'red terrorism' and ordered troops to open fire on a Spartakist demonstration, gunning down

sixteen people.

They demanded that workers hand back the factories to their owners. Finally in January, they dismissed Eichen who had been appointed by Berlin workers to run the police force for their aims. The issue soon became who held the power, the Workers Councils or the bourgeois parliament.

The provocation was designed to bring revolutionary socialists out into the open.

## Reform or revolution

Rosa Luxemburg was born in the small Polish town of Zamosc on 5 March 1871. From a very young age she was active in the socialist movement.

It wasn't long before she was recognised as the theoretical leader of the revolutionary socialists in Poland.

As a young woman of 22 she represented the party at the Congress of the Socialist International.

As her politics developed she was drawn irresistibly to Germany, the centre of the international labour movement where she travelled to in 1898.

At the time the labour movement in Germany was moving away from its revolutionary origins. Germany had undergone tremendous economic growth at the end of the nineteenth century. Since the slump of 1873 the standard of living of the working class had slowly but steadily improved and the trade unions were stronger than ever before.

As their parliamentary representation

Thousands responded to the call of Liebknecht and a Revolutionary Shop Stewards group to take over the War Ministry. But the uprising was poorly organised and indecisive. After its failure the SPD organised a man hunt for Luxemburg and Liebknecht. When they finally tracked them down, they showed them far less mercy than rulers who had ordered thousands of German workers to their deaths in the trenches.

grew the Social Democratic Party began to move away from revolution and openly endorse the path of reform.

The main spokesperson for this trend was Eduard Bernstein. Between 1896 and 1898 he wrote a series of articles attacking the principles of Marxism. Rosa Luxemburg who had just entered the German labour movement rushed to attack Bernstein. In her book *Social Reform or Social Revolution* she attacked the growing trend of reformism.

## Contradictions

Bernstein argued that the contradictions of capitalism were being overcome with the provision of credit which enabled companies to avoid slumps.

But in Rosa Luxemburg's words "Hardly had Bernstein rejected, in 1898, Marx's theory of crises, when a profound general crisis broke out in 1900, while seven years later, a new crisis, beginning in the United States, hit the world market.

The basic dynamic of capitalism was a tendency to overproduction. The credit system might help the individual capitalist in difficulties but it exaggerated further the tendency to overproduction.

At the first sign of economic crisis, credit dried up and so helped to deepen the slump.

Whereas Bernstein saw reforms as the sole goal of the SPD, Luxemburg saw the struggle for reforms as part of the fight for social revolution. She wrote that 'whoever opts for legal reform in place of and in contra-distinction to the conquest of political power, actually chooses not a calmer and slower road to the same aim but a different aim altogether'.

Luxemburg saw revolutionaries as the best fighters for reform because they placed no limits on mobilising workers. But she never saw 'the bourgeois parliamentary hen house as the instrument qualified to carry out the mightiest revolution in the history of the world; the transformation of society from capitalist into socialist forms'.

**THE SOCIAL Democratic parliamentary group's move from revolutionary politics towards reformism culminated in the outbreak of the First World War when they decided to vote in favour of war credits for the Kaiser's government.**

Rosa Luxemburg on the other hand decided to take up the struggle against the war. She sent out 300 telegrams to key activists to build opposition but only got one reply from her friend Clara Zetkin

Undaunted a small group of socialists met in her apartment to organise resistance against the war. This group, led by Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, Franz Mehring and Clara Zetkin became known as the Spartakist

League.

In February 1914 she had been arrested for inciting soldiers to mutiny. The basis of the charge was a speech in which she declared: "If they expect us to murder our French or other foreign brothers, then let us tell them: 'No, under no circumstances'."

Her courtroom speech was later published as *Militarism, War and the Working Class* and is one of the inspiring revolutionary socialist condemnations of war and imperialism.

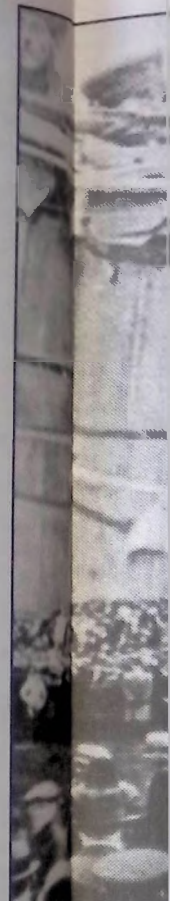
She argued that capitalist competition in the age of imperialism took the form of military as well as economic competition. This she argued is why the fight against militarism cannot be simply a moral struggle for human rights, but had to be a fight against the capitalist system as a whole.

She concludes her most important anti-war pamphlet, the *Junius*

*Pamphlet* with great passion, "The madness will cease and the bloody product of hell come to an end only when the workers of Germany, France, of Great Britain and Russia, awaken from their frenzy, extend to each other the hand of friendship, and drown the bestial chorus of imperialist hyenas with the thunderous battle cry of the modern working class movement: 'Workers of the World Unite!'"

She goes on to state the stark choice that faces humanity: "Bourgeois society faces a dilemma: either a transition to Socialism or a return to barbarism . . . we face the choice: either the victory of imperialism and the decline of all culture, as in ancient Rome . . . or the victory of the Socialism . . . This is the dilemma of world history, either-or; the dye will be cast by the class conscious proletariat."

**THE FIGHT AGAINST WAR**



Armed workers at a

**SOC**

**ROSA LUXEMBURG**

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# FLAME OF



Armed workers at a barricade in Germany 1919 (top), a mass demonstration in December 1918 (bottom) and Rosa Luxemburg (centre)

## Socialism from below

**ROSA LUXEMBURG was one of the first revolutionaries to attack bureaucracy and passivity in the labour movements.**

Most of her political life was spent in Germany where the SPD claimed to be a Marxist party but concentrated on building a huge organisational network through avoiding struggle. It failed to call strikes for the eight hour day on May day.

The 1905 revolution in Russia showed Luxemburg a way out of this stifling bureaucracy. Using a false passport she smuggled herself back into the Russian part of Poland to witness at first hand the revolt.

### Mass Strike

Afterwards she wrote her famous pamphlet, *The Mass Strike*, which she advocated socialism from below. Here she argued that a socialist revolution couldn't simply be understood as a mere change in political form. It had to be established by the activity of workers themselves.

This meant there could be no division between political and economic struggles. Strikes could begin over a small economic demand but they could quickly move to become a challenge to the political system. The economic struggle is the factor that advances the movement from one political

focal point to another. The political struggle periodically fertilises the ground for the economic struggle."

A mass struggle could not be imposed from above. A huge party could not say when and how a strike would erupt and treat it as a manoeuvre. In previous revolutions, the mass of people threw up barricades in support of their great leaders.

But in order that 'the working class may participate en masse in any direct action, it

must first organise itself – it must overcome the split between workshops which the daily yoke of capitalism condemns it to'

This is why the mass strike is the first spontaneous step of a workers revolution.

No wonder her friend Clara Zetkin summed up Rosa's life: "In Rosa Luxemburg the socialist idea was a dominating and powerful passion of both heart and brain, a truly creative passion which burned ceaselessly. . . She was the sharp sword the living flame of Revolution."

### Public Meetings

## ROSA LUXEMBURG AND THE POLITICS OF REVOLUTION

DUBLIN:

Thursday 4th February 7.00pm ATGWU Hall, Abbey Street

BELFAST:

Wednesday: 27th January 8.00pm Garrick Bar, Chichester Street

CORK:

Thursday 28th: January 8.00pm Metropole Hotel

WATERFORD:

Thursday 28th January, 8.00pm ATGWU Keyzer St

GALWAY:

Thursday 28th: 8.00pm Curran's Hotel, Eyre Square

## what do socialists say?

### DL/ LABOUR MERGER:

## Is it the dawn of a new era for the left?

The merger of Labour and Democratic Left has been heralded as the dawn of a new era for the left in Ireland.

However, inside both parties voices were raised to question the basis of the merger.

One Democratic Left activist in Dublin told *Socialist Worker* that he was considering leaving the party. "As a socialist I don't believe that there will be much room for me in the new party. All the talk is about getting into government, it doesn't matter on what basis and this inevitably means supporting either Fianna Fail or Fine Gael.

"I didn't join Democratic Left to become a crutch for two right-wing parties. I genuinely want to fight to change society. Unfortunately I don't think the new party will do this, no matter what the intentions of many ordinary party members may be."

**"I genuinely want to fight to change society. Unfortunately I don't think the new party will do this, no matter what the intentions of many ordinary party members may be."**

### Genuine

John de Courcy Ireland, a Democratic Left member, voted against the merger but has decided to remain in the party. "At the age of eighty seven I'll stay where I am. I also believe that there are very genuine people in the party.

"However, while I am theoretically in favour of the idea of unity I believe that it is premature. The declaration for the new party is very vague. It doesn't define what socialism is in my view, the creation of a totally new society that is run by the people, not the bureaucrats or the party.

"In my speech at the conference I spoke of my concerns about the issue of neutrality and possible involvement in the Partnership For Peace. Again because of the vagueness of the declaration there is no definite position adopted as of yet. However I have made it clear that if there is any move away from neutrality I will leave the party."

**Individual delegates at the Labour conference also argued that the priority of the new party had to be challenging Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, not building up numbers so that they can get straight back into government with them.**

Yet the new Labour Party owes more to Tony Blair than it does to Larkin and Connolly. There is no reference to socialism in the founding document of the new party.

Speaking after the merger Ruairi Quinn ruled out advocating nationalisation for companies like Fruit of the Loom which declare major redundancies.

Gone are the days when Labour talked about the class division and the fundamental

transformation of society.

Instead the leadership wants to stay on the right side of big business. This became clear when Derek McDowell, the Labour spokesperson on finance, gave full backing to Fianna Fail in their defence of the 12.5% tax rate on profits.

The moves to lower taxes on profits began when Ruairi Quinn was Minister for Finance.

**Despite courting big business the leaderships of both parties made very emotive speeches to their conferences about the need to fight against the growing polarisation of Irish society. The crisis in the health service, the under-funding of education and the plight of those on social welfare figured prominently.**

But they never explained how they could stop hospital ward closures and increase funding for primary schools — while they were cutting the taxes of the rich.

### Dominance

Promises of a Government of Reform are meaningless in the face of a complete failure to challenge the dominance of the market and advocacy of partnership with the bosses.

The merger of DL and Labour has cleared the ground for a left wing alternative party to emerge.

Support for New Labour may show some signs of increasing because many want an alternative to the corrupt right wing policies of Fianna Fail.

But there is also a substantial minority who identify Labour with a betrayal of working class aspirations.

With the disappearance of Democratic Left, this minority will look for a far more radical alternative that attacks the wealthy elite who made gains during the Celtic Tiger.

by DEIDRE CRONIN



## DEBATE

# Should workers back partnership?

**THIS year the unions will open a debate on whether to enter another partnership agreement with the employers. Here we print a shortened version of a debate between Paul Sweeney, research officer of SIPTU and author of a book on the Celtic Tiger, and Owen McCormack, a member of the Busworkers Action Group. The debate took place at Marxism '98.**

## PAUL SWEENEY:

**I DON'T like the term partnership, I prefer employee participation or involvement.**

The reason is that partnership generally involves an equal relationship and the relationship between capital and labour is not an equal one.

We don't have rights over investments. We don't oversee spending on the health services or over taxation policies or over the laws over trade union recognition. We can argue for some things and indeed we are more involved than we were in the past, but we don't have control.

Employee involvement involves a much more sophisticated response from us in the unions. The question I keep asking is: Are we up to it?

We analysed the reality of the free-for-all in the 1980s and wages for average workers fell in real terms. Since the partnership agreements, the first one was in 1987, wages have increased in real terms. We estimate about 8 percent above inflation over the last two years.

*Looking at the figures, it is not costing the employers much more than inflation. Workers come out of with a rise above inflation from tax breaks.*

The tax breaks come from the fact that we were overtaxed on labour and virtually no tax on profits or capital. I believe that houses should be taxed and all kinds of property should be taxed. It's a basic socialist position.

Partnership is not just about moderate wage

increases, it gives employers stability for their decision making. And, in some companies, we are involved in that strategic decision making.

In 1990, there were 1,090,000 employees in Ireland; substantially the same as 1921. We simply never created any jobs. Since then up to the year 2000

**The key is to make it work in a real fashion. I think it is working, it is uneven in its development. It is the class struggle in a more sophisticated way than the adversarial ways of the past.**

about 400,000 jobs will be created, which is amazing. You can say that would happen without partnership. But I would say that partnership was a major contributor to the unprecedented employment growth.

There are problems with partnership. A very serious one is union recognition. The minimum wage is another. Within Europe, the way we have developed has been determined already. Some of the good things like women's issues, working time have come from Europe. However, on the overall economic battle, the Right has won and won very substantially. Free competition, though it is never really free, rules.

The state companies are being broken up and subject to competition. Privatisation goes along with low pay and no pension schemes.

Then there are companies like Ryanair and Esat that are viciously anti union. They are not just non-union they are anti union.

If the unions do not get a say in the new enterprises then workers are in deep trouble. These are serious issues, which if they are not dealt with, then we will have problems

But in general there is much greater participation.

The fact is that in the globally competitive environment, firms that are not flexible will not survive. The best way to get flexibility is to get workers involved.

*It is not a short-term thing about next year's pay rise. It is a long-term involvement. Every collective agreement has partnership in it but it is the Frank Sinatra school of partnership: "You'll do it my way." That is the really nasty side of the Celtic tiger. We have to counter that.*

We will be entering into negotiations for the next agreement. What happens depends on what one employer said to me recently "Can you not control your members?" Which is ridiculous, for the members control me. It's a voluntary institution.

You cannot order workers to accept deals.

Overall, employee involvement is a reflection of the reality of what's happening in the workplace and the requirements of globalisation where employers need employee's hands and brains to do more sophisticated work. Workers like to be involved.

The key is to make it work in a real fashion. I think it is working. It is uneven in its development. It is the class struggle in a more sophisticated way than the adversarial ways of the past. I think it has worked very well since 1987. It looks good, but of course, you can never be sure of the future.

## OWEN MCCORMACK:

**PAUL SWEENEY tells us that partnership has replaced the old ideas of adversarial forms of class struggle.**

The only blips on the horizon are a few die-hard trade unionists, a few dinosaurs, who hanker back to the old

days of industrial struggle and strikes.

This version of partnership doesn't reflect the reality of working class peoples lives.

The question we have to ask is what is partnership for? What is this common purpose that Paul talks about?

The fact is, partnership means working class people accepting that the whole purpose of their existence is to be competitive and to make profits for the company that they work for.

That means that the concerns of trade unionists must take second place to the need for profits.

The adversarial methods of industrial relations, don't exist because members of the Socialist Workers Party want them to exist.

They exist because they reflect a very basic truth about the society we live in - that the interests of employers and the interests of workers do not coincide.

*Partnership is not about workers co-operating for a common good. It is about the oldest trick in the book, it's about increasing the rate of exploitation.*

Paul in his book on the Celtic Tiger talks about new work practices. Let's take one new work practice - annualised hours.

Many shop stewards get sent on courses that give the impression that the purpose of annualised hours is to give workers the new experience of being at home watching day time television on Mondays.

In *The Life of Brian*, they argue that the best thing the Romans ever did for us was crucifixion.

It's the same when Paul argues that the best thing multinationals did for us was to introduce annualised hours. There is nothing empowering about getting a call to go into work on your day off.

There is nothing liberating about having part time contracts. What is the advantage of being multi-skilled when this means doing two jobs instead of one? It is not liberating to find that you have no job security.

We are told that the boom comes from partnership, that living standards are rising. While many workers have gotten some pay increases in the last ten years, for most workers the situation is more complex.

Young workers are enter-



**What have the buiding workers gained from partnership?**

ing the workforce to find their pay and conditions worse than older colleagues or even the previous generation. Zero hour working is widespread, the rates of pay in the service industry are outrageous. In construction, workers are paying for the de-regulation with their lives. Across sectors, we are seeing the introduction of yellow pack labour.

**We haven't gained anything by being in partnership that we wouldn't have by staying out. But what it 's done is disarm workers politically, by convincing people there is no alternative to the market.**

Where I work, wages have increased over the last number of years. But so have mortgages, the cost of living, the cost of education, and health care.

According to Paul's own book, the productivity of Irish workers increased by 19 percent over the decade of social partnership while in the same period the productivity of Japanese workers

decreased 10 percent.

Yet even though the share of the economy to wages has decreased, the money hasn't gone to public services. It has gone to profits.

Before partnership the top 10 percent earned three and a half times more than the bottom 10 percent. Now it is 5 times as much.

Partnership has shifted wealth from the working class to the wealthy.

The optimism that the boom will last forever is starting in the face of the facts. What happens in the world economy has an effect.

Look at the collapse of the Asian tigers, Russia, and the chaos on the financial markets. It shows how unbalanced the system is.

*I don't know how long the boom is going to last but what I do know is that to put our faith in a system that is based on exploitation is like telling lambs to lie down with wolves.*

We haven't gained anything by being in partnership that we wouldn't have gained by staying out. But what it has done is to disarm workers politically, by convincing people there is no alternative to the market.

We want a partnership of workers across trades and sectors in opposition to the bosses and the system, not to help it make more from our exploitation.



## in my view

MILLENNIUM  
MADNESS OF  
THE MARKET

IT'S THE year of the millennium and some nightmare scenarios are already emerging about a bug nick-named the madcow disease for computers.

This year, you should think twice about flying an aeroplane on New Year's Eve. The computer controlled air traffic control might not get you back on the ground after midnight.

Hospitals might not be the safest place to be either. According to the Maeve Smith, the Year 2000 project manager at Beaumont Hospital, there is a "likelihood of an increased number of accidents due to the millennium bug".

**Patients might not be guaranteed an adequate water supply, for example, because Dublin Corporation has not made adequate preparations to change its computerised valve systems.**

There are some who want to press 'The End of The World As We Know It' scenario and see the millennium bug as a god send. They are predicting fires, floods and every pestilence imaginable. The chief economist at Deutsche Bank Securities, Edward Yardeni, seems to belong to this sect. He recently predicted that the Y2K bug (computer speak for the millennium bug) will turn Asia into 'burnt toast'.

## Anarchy

Yet behind all the doomsday speculation there is a major problem that has arisen from the anarchy of the market.

The Y2K issue emerged because computer code programmers tried to save costs for major companies by rendering the date in two digits rather than four.

One of those programmers was Alan Greenspan, who is now the lynchpin of US financial policy, charged with steering America through the present global economic turbulence.

Last year Greenspan told the US congress "I used to write those programmes in the Sixties and Seventies and was so proud of the fact that I was able to squeeze a few elements of space by not having to put 19 before the year. It never entered our minds that those programmes would have lasted more than a few years".

Some programmers such as Robert Berner, the creator of the ASCII computer language, objected. Eventually the US National Bureau of Standards took up the issue and then referred the matter to the Department of Defence,

by KIERAN ALLEN

the largest computer operator at the time.

They insisted on dropping the 19 because they wanted bigger firepower for less money. According to Harry White, a Pentagon computer specialist at the time, "They wouldn't listen to anything else. They were more occupied with Vietnam."

The National Bureau of Standards succumbed to pressure from the military industrial complex and announced that two digit years was the preferred option of all US government agencies.

Even when several technical societies recruited the special presidential science adviser, Edward David, to plead the case with Nixon, he politely listened and then asked for help in fixing his television set!

Computers began to really take off after the discovery of the micro-chip in 1970. Today it is estimated that there are 1.2 trillion lines of lethal software code located in virtually every country.

## Expert

One computer expert summed up the problem, "If we built houses the way we built software, the first woodpecker to come along would destroy civilisation."

Yet big business and the military establishment are extremely reluctant to clean up the mess they created.

**They don't want to spend the money installing anti-bug programmes if they can at all avoid it.**

The anarchy of the market often induces a psychology that 'it will be all right on the night'. The only companies who are really concerned are often the insurance companies who fear they will be loaded with massive claims.

Two computer experts, Dale Way and Mark Haselkorn, recently summed up how companies interpret demands to do something about the Y2K bug. They think it is like telling them

"Give me \$40 million to do something no one else has done and prevent a problem many people think is not real and will not in any case happen for years and otherwise will contribute nothing to your bottom line".

Any yet these are the very same people who lecture us all about the need for efficiency.

## book

## Reactionary ramblings

EVERY WEEK Conor Cruise O'Brien spreads the gospel of conservatism in the Irish Independent.

The greatest Irishman who ever lived has now produced his memoirs, explaining that he could have saved us all from the twin damnations of nationalism and religion if only we had done what he thought.

## Involve

All autobiographies involve self justification, but what O'Brien does is raise this to the level of farce. The book is filled with him fighting old scores and returning slights, real or imagined. Occasionally, as in his description of Noel Browne as "half mad", it is mere petulance, though nonetheless irritating for all that.



In more radical days Cruise O'Brien marching against Apartheid

O'Brien's reputation was built not only by self proclaimed intelligence but from his oft recalled liberal past.

In the sixties he exposed some of the UN's dirty work in the Congo. He expressed mild opposition to the Vietnam war and showed a passing sympathy for the Civil Rights Movement

In his later years he has become a bitter reactionary. It is difficult to believe that the O'Brien who introduced the Broadcasting ban on Sinn Fein and covered up the activities of the Heavy gang is the same O'Brien who claimed to be an anti-imperialist, civil libertarian and opponent of apartheid.

Yet the connection between the two lay in his abhorrence of change that came from below.

O'Brien was in favour of civil liberties for the middle classes but not for the poor. His opposi-

tion to the Catholic church had as much to do with snobbery about the beliefs of ordinary people as to any opposition to bigotry.

## Vehicle

His support for the Labour Party had more to do with anti-republicanism and as vehicle of preventing radical change than sympathy for socialism.

When he was a student at Trinity, in probably the most radical act of his life, he proposed that his college society give

half of their profits to the republicans in the Spanish Civil War.

This was quite a brave thing to do.

But then he proposed that the other half of the money should buy alcohol for him and his friends. Of such courage are liberals made.

Like many liberals O'Brien was simply a reactionary with a kind face. But he has lived so long that there is no need to keep up the facade.

**C. Cruise O'Brien  
Memoirs: My Life  
and Themes.  
Poolbeg £20**

## music

Songs of  
struggle

SONGS OF Irish Labour is a new CD which is well worth getting.

The CD is dedicated "to all who believe that the world belongs to those who work in it and not those who parasite upon their labour, to all who believe that the labour movement should draw strength from its past, even while facing the ever more sophisticated challenges of its future, to those who still sing the old songs and to those who may yet write the new ones."

It's hard not to be moved by the songs featured here, some of them over a hundred years old.

They are songs that arose directly from the struggles of the past - a rousing version of James Connolly's "A Rebel Song" is provided by Jimmy Kelly. Connolly's "The Watchword of Labour" also appears, with its chorus proclaiming "That labour must arise from its knees, boys! And claim the broad earth as its own".

It's hard to believe that this was once an anthem of the Labour Party.

Apart from the classic labour songs of the past there are also three songs written by Martin Whelan. The opening track, "Bread and Roses", was inspired by Sean O'Casey's characterisation of Jim Larkin as "a man who would put a flower in a vase on a table as well as a loaf on a plate".

More recent struggles are also celebrated - the great Ewan MacColl's "Ten Young Women and One Young Man" tells the story of the anti-apartheid Dunnes Stores strikers.

The CD closes with two versions of "The Red Flag", the anthem of international socialism written by Irishman Jim Connell, one of which is sung by Des Geraghty. You can't help wonder if he himself saw irony as he sang, "Then raise the scarlet standard high/ Within its shade we'll live and die/ Though cowards flinch and traitors sneer/ We'll keep the red flag flying here".

"Songs of Irish Labour" is an inspirational collection of songs which reminds us of the proud tradition of Irish labour.

## book

A tragic indictment  
of the system

TWO THINGS struck me in reading *Sophie's Story*. The first was the lack of sensationalism in the graphic descriptions of violent physical and sexual assault McColgan visited upon his family.

The second can best be summed up by a statement from the review group inquiry into the case "A key feature was that from an early stage there were repeated disclosures of abuse to health care professionals. [Despite this] the children did not receive protection. They were trapped in a system that was not responsive to their needs until 14 years later."

In 1979 Patsy McColgan went to the North Western Health Board and

by MARY  
CONNELL

asked them to take her children into care because of the danger posed by their father. The Health Board's response was less than satisfactory. McColgan was advised to "make it up" to his daughter and the family remained under his abusive control.

Why was this allowed to happen? One answer lies in capitalism's attitude to the family.

## Family

Under capitalism the ideal family structure is one where there are two parents - one to raise the children and the other to provide for the family.

This means that the state's support for the family is kept to a minimum.

A key feature of the

McColgan case was the emphasis on the rights of the family as opposed to the rights of the children, wife or mother.

Great pressure was exerted on the McColgans to keep the family together under the control of the male head of that family.

The father was seen as embodying the whole of the family and his position was respected and upheld to the detriment of his children's well being.

The defence that a system did not exist in the 1970's to deal with cases of suspected child abuse does not hold water. Guidelines issued in 1977 contained a provision for keeping a list of children that regularly go to hospital casualty units with non-accidental injuries, allowing enquires to be made into those families.

The greatest indictment of the today's system is that there are still families in 1999 that are known to the Health Boards as having the same dynamics and characteristics as the McColgan family.





**where we stand**

Workers create all the wealth in capitalist society. A new society can only be constructed when they collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution.

**FOR REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM**

The present system cannot be reformed out of existence. Parliament cannot be used to end the system.

The courts army and police are there to defend the interests of the capitalist class not to run society in a neutral fashion.

To destroy capitalism, workers need to smash the state and create a workers' state based on workers' councils.

**FOR REAL SOCIALISM, EAST AND WEST:**

The SWP welcomed the break-up of the USSR and the end of the East European dictatorships.

These states were not socialist but were run by a state-capitalist class.

We are against the domination of the globe by imperialist powers and we oppose their wars. We are for the right of all nations, East and West, to self-determination.

**FOR AN END TO ALL OPPRESSION**

We oppose all forms of oppression which divide and weaken the working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women.

We stand for: free contraception and free, legalised abortion and the right to divorce; the complete separation of church and state, an end to church control over schools and hospitals; an end to discrimination against gays and lesbians; an end to racism and anti-traveller bigotry.

We argue for working class unity in the fight against oppression.

**FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH:**

Northern Ireland is a sectarian state, propped up by the British Army.

Catholic workers are systematically discriminated against by the state. The division between Catholic and Protestant workers weakens the whole working class.

Workers' unity can only be won and maintained in a fight to smash both the Northern and Southern states.

We stand for the immediate withdrawal of British troops. Violence will only end when workers unite in the fight for a workers' republic.

**FOR A FIGHTING TRADE UNION MOVEMENT:**

Trade unions exist to defend workers' interests. But the union leaders' role is to negotiate with capitalism—not to end it.

We support the leaders when they fight but oppose them when they betray workers. We stand for independent rank and file action.

**FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY:**

To win socialism socialists need to organise in a revolutionary party. This party needs to argue against right-wing ideas and for overthrowing the system. The SWP aims to build such a party in Ireland.

**Limerick Corporation**

# SHOP STEWARDS UNDER ATTACK

**A CONCERTED attack on shop stewards in Limerick Corporation is being orchestrated by the Labour Relations Commission.**

In November 1998, the Director of the LRC Advisory Service, Declan Morrin, produced a report on industrial relations in the Corporation which singled out shop stewards for special attack.

## SIPTU colludes in the attempt at victimisation

**EVIDENCE is mounting that SIPTU officials are working behind the scenes to see key shop stewards in Limerick Corporation removed or even victimised.**

SIPTU officials met Declan Morrin, the Labour Relations Commission representative privately before the report was issued. After the report was published SIPTU removed the credentials of a senior shop steward when he was out sick.

Meanwhile management has also increased the pressure on the stewards by refusing to let them back to work without

have conducted a survey based on a random sample of managers and workers.

But nowhere did he indicate exactly how many workers expressed particular views.

**Mention**

He claimed that workers told him that "some shop stewards want to cause trouble rather than do their work". But these were not the exact words that the interviewees used and there is no mention of how many workers made

this claim.

In his conclusions, Morrin protests that "management's right and duty to manage is constantly questioned or challenged by workers and shop stewards".

In a direct attempt to undermine shop steward organisation, Morrin recommends that

■ all union business in the Corporation involve full time officials.

■ that a special communications forum is established which excludes shop stewards.

■ that shop stewards do not get 'open access' to the Personnel Manager but go through lengthy procedures first.

■ that union AGMs be re-organised so that they do not reflect the spontaneous feelings of the members.

Morrin's report represents a blatant attempt to

interfere in internal union affairs.

This is part of a growing culture of collusion between managers and top union officials to undermine shop stewards organisation in favour of 'professional' full time officials who are removed from the feeling of rank and file workers.

## 'Is this what we get for defending workers interests?'

**UNION activists in Limerick Corporation are outraged by the concerted campaign to undermine their position.**

They recognise that their workplace is in the front line of a new attack on the role of the shop steward. They are calling on shop stewards around the country to join their support One Limerick shop steward told *Socialist Worker*, "Morrin has released a document which will do nothing to deal with the underlying problem - the issue of privatisation. "Since 1987 manning levels have declined to such a level that services cannot be provided by direct labour.

"The shop stewards tried to negotiate on the terms of the various partnership deals. But management introduced changes without consultation. When the shop stewards disagreed they were bullied and victimised. The union officials sat back and let management try to destroy union morale and bully the shop stewards. SIPTU recently issued a report called the Strategic Development Initiative where it was stated that 'SIPTU must re-affirm its identity as a workers organisation acting clearly in the interests of workers'. "We can only ask: what are they doing in Limerick Corporation? Is this what shop stewards get for defending workers' interests?"

## National petition in support of stewards

The Rank and File Solidarity Network has launched a national petition to win support for the Limerick shop stewards.

Speaking for the network, Carolann Duggan said,

"The unions must be seen to stand by their shop stewards. Shop stewards are in daily contact with their members and know the real feeling of the rank and file better than any full time official.

"We need to highlight this case so that thousands of workers can examine who exactly has an interest in undermining shop steward organisation."

The petition calls on the union leaders to reverse their present policy and defend their shop stewards in Limerick Corporation.

Copies of the petition can be obtained from the Rank and File Solidarity Network c/o 105 O'Hogan Road, Ballyfermot, D10.

**CPSU**

# 40% vote to leave P2000

**NEARLY 40% of CPSU, stake the union unilaterally, the civil servants union, withdrawing from the Partnership 2000. It shows the scale of the opposition to a pay deal which has held wages back while accommodation costs soar.**

The vote is all the more impressive because the issue at

Horan was also assisted by the fact that Telecom workers overwhelmingly voted Yes, fearing that they might lose out on the ESOP share option scheme if the union withdrew from P2000.

The union leaders were mandated to hold the ballot by a special conference where the left had a majority. But the vote shows that the left will have to deepen its base at workplace level in order to defeat the CPSU bureaucracy.

**Scare**

The union leadership led by Blair Horan ran a scare campaign, claiming that workers would lose their existing P2000 increases. They won a majority on a less than 50 percent turn-out.

**BATU**

## Victory at O'Connors

**REMEMBER O'Connor's building site in Dublin? They had two building workers committed to prison for defying the Industrial Relations Act.**

Now news has filtered out how O'Connor's have been brought to their knees by a sustained period of action.

O'Connor's has been forced to cough up the legal expenses of trying to bring BATU to the courts. Eddie Moran the sub-contractor at the heart of the original dispute has been removed.

O'Connor's have also promised to take on direct labour at their site on Merrion Road and Conyngham Rd.

Who says that workers cannot defy anti-union laws and win?

**Join the socialists**

If you want to join the Socialist Workers Party, fill in this form and send it to: PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, Tel: (01) 872 2682

Name .....

Address .....

Phone .....

Union: .....

**SWP Branch meetings - all welcome**

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| <p><b>ATHLONE:</b><br/>Contact 01-872 2682 for details<br/><b>BRAY</b><br/>Contact 01-872 2682 for details<br/><b>BELFAST CENTRAL:</b><br/>Meets every Tuesday at 8.00pm in the Garrick Bar, Chichester St<br/>Jan.12th: 1919: General Strike in Belfast<br/>Speaker: Niall Morton<br/>Jan.19th: Socialists and Unions<br/><b>BELFAST EAST:</b><br/>Contact 01-8722682 for details<br/><b>BELFAST SOUTH:</b><br/>Meets every Wednesday at 8.00pm in Queens University Students Union Club Room<br/><b>BELFAST QUEENS UNIVERSITY:</b><br/>Meets every Thursday 1.00pm Mature Students Room<br/><b>CORK CENTRAL:</b><br/>Meets every Thursday at 7.00pm in Denny's pub, Cornmarket</p> | <p>Jan 7th: The Portuguese Revolution<br/>Jan.14: The politics of James Connolly<br/><b>CORK SOUTH:</b><br/>Meets every Monday at 8.00pm in Scellig, UCC<br/>Jan.11th: Why is the world economy in crisis?<br/>Speaker: Dave Lordon<br/><b>DERRY:</b><br/>Meets every Tuesday at 8.00pm in Garrick Bar, Chichester St<br/>Jan.11th: US Imperialism in the Gulf<br/><b>DUNDALK</b><br/>Contact 01 - 872 2682 for details<br/><b>DUN LAOGHAIRE:</b><br/>Meets every Tuesday at 8.00pm in the Christian Institute<br/>Jan.12th: How do we beat Imperialism?<br/>Jan.19th: 30 years on: The Civil</p> | <p>Rights Movement<br/><b>DUBLIN ARTANE/COOLOCK:</b><br/>Meets every Tuesday at 8.30pm in Artane-Beaumont Recreational Centre opp. Artane Castle<br/>Jan.12th: What do socialists say about the Euro?<br/>Speaker: Kieran Allen<br/>Jan.19th: The origins of the NICivil Rights movement<br/>Speaker: Willy Cumming<br/>Jan.26th: Marx and Religion<br/><b>DUBLIN NORTH CENTRAL:</b><br/>Meets every Wednesday at 8.30pm in Conways, Parnell St.<br/><b>DUBLIN NORTH WEST:</b><br/>Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm in the Snug, Dorset St<br/>Jan.14th: 1913 - James Larkin and the limits of Syndicalism<br/>Speaker: Dave McDonagh<br/>Jan.21st: Capitalism and Crisis</p> | <p>Speaker: Colm O'Rian<br/><b>DUBLIN RANELAGH:</b><br/>Meets every Thursday at 8pm in Tom Kelly Flats, Lomman's Centre<br/>Jan.7th: Zionism and the Israeli State<br/>Speaker: Grace Lally<br/>Jan.14th: The Portuguese Revolution<br/>Speaker: Pedro Borges<br/><b>DUBLIN RIALTO:</b><br/>Meets every Tuesday at 8pm St. Andrews Community Centre, SCR, Rialto<br/><b>DUBLIN RATHMINES:</b><br/>Meets every Wednesday at 8.00pm in O'Connell's Pub, Richmond St<br/>Jan.13th: Why we need a revolutionary paper?<br/><b>DUBLIN SOUTH CENTRAL:</b><br/>Meets every Thursday at 8.30pm</p> | <p>in Trinity Inn, Pearse St.<br/>Jan.7th: Why do socialists support strikes?<br/>Speaker: Shay Ryan<br/>Jan.14th: What will socialism be like?<br/>Speaker: Ann Ryan<br/><b>DUBLIN TALLAGHT:</b><br/>Meets every Thursday at 8.00pm in Jobstown Community Centre<br/>Jan.7th: War and Imperialism<br/>Jan.14th: Alienation<br/><b>GALWAY:</b><br/>Meets every Thursday in Currans Hotel, Eyre Square 7.30pm<br/>Jan.14th: What do we mean by US Imperialism?<br/>Speaker: John Connolly<br/><b>Public Meeting</b><br/>Jan.21st: Rosa Luxemburg: The Living Flame of Revolution<br/><b>LIMERICK:</b><br/>Speaker: Kieran Allen<br/>Contact 01 - 872 2682 for details</p> | <p><b>MAYNOOTH:</b><br/>Meets every Wednesday at 6.30pm in Clashall D.Arrs Block, Maynooth College<br/><b>TRINITY COLLEGE</b><br/>Meets every Thursday at 7.00pm (See posters for room no.)<br/>Jan.14th: 40 years on: Is Cuba Socialist?<br/>Jan.21st: Can socialist planning work?<br/><b>WATERFORD:</b><br/>Meets every Thursday in at 8.00pm ATGWU Hall, Kersw St.<br/>Jan.7th: Israel: The Hijacked State<br/>Speaker: Denis Redfern<br/>Jan.14th: The International Socialist Tradition<br/>Speaker: Declan Cheasty<br/>Jan.21st: Is religion the opium of the people?<br/><b>Public Meeting</b><br/>Jan.28th: Rosa Luxemburg: The Living Flame of Revolution</p> |
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## Fruit of the Loom

# FIGHT TO STOP THE CLOSURES

**FRUIT OF the Loom workers in Derry and Donegal have been devastated at the news of 770 job losses announced before Christmas. But there is still plenty to fight for at Fruit of the Loom.**

Three factories in Raphoe, Malin and Milford in County Donegal are to close completely in the next few weeks and 120 jobs are to go in the Buncrana plants.

### Wages

The company is moving its T-shirt manufacturing to Morocco where wages are £30 a week.

There had been months of rumours about the job losses, but workers were told nothing until the last minute. At the Shorefront dying plant in Buncrana workers held three sit-ins in the canteen, to demand that they were informed of the company's plans.

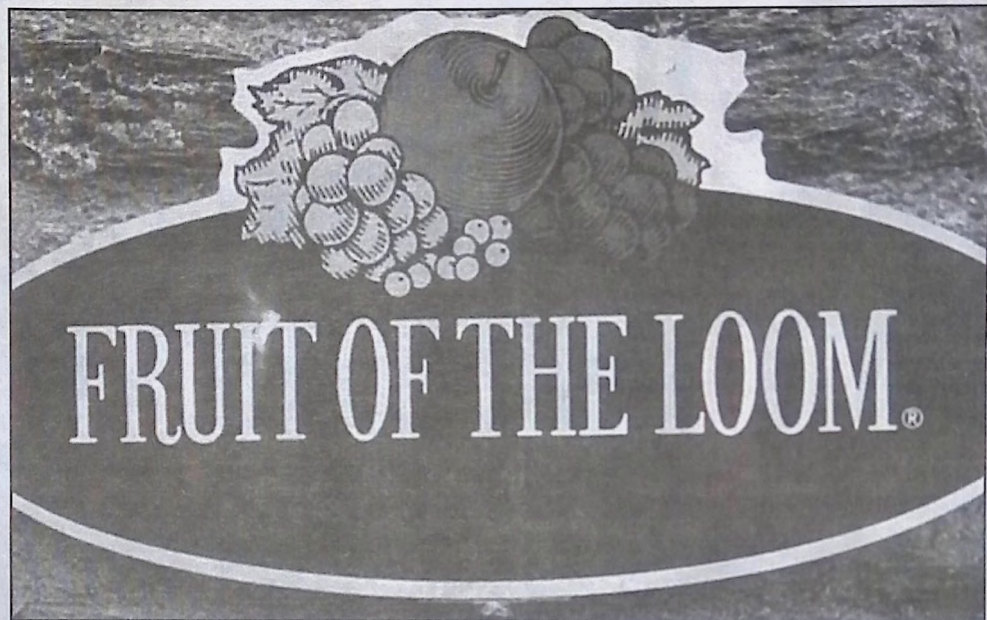
"This is just going to devastate the area," one

of the workers at Buncrana told *Socialist Worker*. "Fruit of the Loom used to have mortgage companies in here every Friday, tying people into big loans. Now what are they going to do? My son left school at 15 to work here. I tried to get him to stay on but all his friends were working and getting money. Now where are those kids going to get a job?"

Most of the workers in the two Buncrana factories will keep their jobs for the time being. But there are no guarantees. "They are saying that we're safe until the end of next year," said a worker from Buncrana. "But the letter we got said that production was 'subject to regular review'."

"They're just playing with words so that they have a get out clause. Morocco is due to be in full production by April. We could all go then. How can you trust anything these bastards say?"

In addition, workers fear that Fruit of the Loom will use this year



to move most remaining production to the North, where wages are lower still.

The company is still waiting for £14 million in IDB handouts in the North, but it has to increase employment figures to over 900 in Derry before they can get it

## Why won't SIPTU fight the sackings

**Fruit of the Loom owner, Bill Farley, earned over £900,000 last year.**

**Farley made millions out of stock market 'junk bonds' in the 1980's and is a close friend of US President Bill Clinton.**

**Farley's tax dodging means that he can fit in well with the Irish rich.**

**In 1998 he moved the headquarters of Fruit of the Loom to the Cayman Islands to avoid US income tax.**

**Sacked**

**In 1997 he sacked 6,000 workers in 9 factories in the US and moved production to the Caribbean to grab government subsidies and to exploit cheaper wage rates.**

He has done the same in Ireland. In September last year, Bill Farley visited Ireland in order to horse-trade with Tanaiste Mary Harney about how much of the grants he would have to repay.

To start with, Harney asked for £11 million back if 700 jobs went, but has now backtracked to only asking for £5 million to be paid back.

Farley uses 'global competition' as his excuse.

He implies that workers here are pricing themselves out of a job.

But a worker at the Ballymacharry factory in Buncrana explains, "We're on piece rates for the amount of garments we make."

"If the work is there you can earn £200 or £300 a week but that means not taking your breaks. It's really hard

work.

"But the last three months the volume of production has been run down, so we're just on the basic rate of £150."

Another worker in the warehouse said "I've been here ten years and I come out of there with £160, even after working shifts. For a married man with three kids, it's not much."

### Profits

The low wages it pays everywhere are the reason that Fruit of the Loom made £100 million in profit this year alone. Farley is only moving to Morocco to make even bigger profits.

The money is there to provide jobs. It is a matter of putting the rights of workers before the greed of Bill Farley.

## What We Think

THE redundancies at Fruit of the Loom are only the start of a wave of job losses. Despite earlier predictions that the Celtic Tiger would last for another decade, government agencies are revising downward their figures for job creation.

The global recession is bound to hit Ireland sooner rather than later.

The government argue that nothing can be done because they cannot interfere in the market. Sharks like Bill Farley are supposed to be let roam the world leaving devastation in their wake.

But when employers get into trouble the government intervenes to bail them out.

In 1984, when the AIB came near to bankruptcy, the government stepped in to save them.

Even Tony O'Reilly called for more state intervention when he thought the financial markets were about to implode in September.

If the government can intervene to save the employer's profits, why can't they do something to save jobs for workers?

Fruit of the Loom should be taken into public ownership. The company produces tea shirts and cheap clothing which are needed by millions across the world. If Farley does not want to make them while paying workers modest low wages, the Irish government should step in instead.

Fruit of the Loom workers should follow the example of Clondalkin Paper Mills workers who occupied their plant to demand nationalisation in the early eighties. They saved their jobs for several years.

## The greed behind the job losses

**The company has offered a redundancy package of three and a half weeks plus the statutory half a week's pay for each year of service.**

This is at least a week and a half less than workers received at Semperit two years ago and two and half weeks less than many recent redundancy packages.

Their union SIPTU is recommending that workers accept the deal as "the best that we can get" but workers should vote against the deal when it is balloted on in January.

At the very least this would send a strong message to the company that workers were not prepared to be walked over.

Rejection of the deal could also pave the way for a real fight against the job losses. Fruit of the Loom still has a load of expensive machinery that it wants to move to new factories in Morocco. Workers report that some machinery was already being moved out during the Christmas close down.

But picket lines to prevent the machinery being moved would win

widespread support and put enormous pressure on the company to keep the jobs here.

If they refused, the action could be linked to demands that the company is taken into public ownership and run for the benefit of workers.

At a packed and angry union meeting on Thursday 19 December in Buncrana, SIPTU union officials complained that such action would be "illegal" as the machinery is the property of Fruit of the Loom.

Despite workers raising the issue from the floor, the local SIPTU officials refused to allow even a vote for action. But the machinery has been more than paid for by government grants.

The British and Irish governments have given Fruit of the Loom over £46 million in handouts. Fruit of the Loom got millions more from the low 10 per cent tax rates for manufacturing companies in the South.

The Irish government actually built factories from scratch for Fruit of the Loom in Dungloe and Raphoe for around £5 million each. Now both are being closed.



# Socialist Worker

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Inside

**FRUIT OF THE LOOM:  
Fight to  
stop the  
closure**



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# Blair's big business backers

**THE resignation of Peter Mandelson, the man supposed to have masterminded Labour's election victory, revealed a lot about Blair's government.**

Mandelson lived a millionaire's lifestyle on an MP's salary because he had rich friends who could give him soft loans.

## Policies

The Labour government has surrounded itself with wealthy individuals who have pressurised it to continue the old Tory policies.

Geoffrey Robinson was able to lend Mandelson £373,000 more easily than most of us could lend a friend a fiver until the end of the week.

Robinson owns Transtec Automotive, which has a smelting factory just outside Derry, where workers literally give their sweat and blood for the sake of his

profits.

In the last few years, health and safety inspectors have examined the Derry plant because of serious accidents there.

Workers say that safety guards are

removed from machines to speed up the work and are replaced before the health and safety people arrive.

But the Labour government has done nothing to improve safety at Robinson's

Derry plant or any other factory.

Nor have they given workers back the full right to down tools to protest about poor conditions.

## Labour betrays desire for change

**LABOUR'S sucking-up to the bosses has had far wider effects in Northern Ireland. Many of its longstanding promises have been forgotten because they don't fit in with their rich friends' agenda.**

The Eleven Plus, which is opposed by every teacher's union in the North can't be scrapped because the Labour government refuse to bring in the change.

The Tory plans to run down all but six hospitals across the North are being kept, while profiteers are being offered the rich pickings of Private Finance Initiatives to fund new wards in the six 'regional centres'.

Labour's refusal to extend the Abortion Act to the North is no problem for well-off

women who are frequent visitors to London. But for working class women, the difficulty of getting £4 - 500 together means they are three times more likely to have a late abortion than women in Britain.

## Privatised

In opposition, Labour attacked the high price of electricity in the North - almost 20 percent dearer than in Britain.

In government, it has ignored the fat cat salaries of privatised NIE executives and done nothing about its huge profits (the share price has doubled in a year)

The storm damage to power lines over Christmas was fixed in the South within 48 hours.

In parts of the North, people were with-

out power for 4-5 days.

The reason? Lack of investment in up-to-date equipment.

But Labour will do nothing that would upset their friends, the rich shareholders.

Since his resignation, we've heard a lot about how Mandelson got Labour elected.

But it was hatred for the Tories and a real desire for change that led so many people to vote Labour in May 1997— not Mandelson's media games.

The desire for change is still there.

Labour isn't going to upset its rich friends by changing anything from the top.

The best way to make 1999 a good year for workers is to start the fight to change things from below.